

# **COLCHESTER PLANNING COMMISSION**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**JUNE 16, 2009**

**PRESENT:** Tom Mulcahy, Peter Larrabee, Rich Paquette and Pam Loranger

**ALSO PRESENT:** Sarah Hadd, Town Planner

### **1. Call to Order**

T. Mulcahy called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

### **2. Public Forum on Village Rezoning**

S. Hadd provided a synopsis of the existing zoning districts and the uses allowed by referencing the Table of Permissible Uses included in the Zoning Regulations for the Village. She highlighted the different districts and outlined the requirements in terms of lot size and road frontage. S. Hadd commented that there are many different zoning districts in the Village that range from commercial to high density. She also highlighted the possible rezonings in the Colchester Village Neighborhood and noted that a letter was sent out on June 8<sup>th</sup> to affected property owners informing them that the Commission is considering rezoning their property to General Development One (GD1). S. Hadd explained that the GD1 allows for both residential and compatible commercial uses such as retail, office, and personal services such as a beauty salon.

T. Mulcahy opened up the floor to take comments and questions from the public.

Diane Tabachnick, 801 Main Street, stated that her property is proposed to be rezoned from R2 to R3 and would like clarification of the implications of that to her. S. Hadd explained that R3 allows for smaller lot sizes. In the R3 district a property owner would be able to subdivide their property if they could provide 100 feet of road frontage per lot and 15,000 square feet per unit. The intention is to recognize that the Village is populated by older homes on small lots.

Brad Gardner suggested that the Commission look at the PUD Regulations which presently require 5 acres. It is his position that they are too stringent and there should be changes made. If the PUD requirements were less stringent there would be more opportunity for infill development noting that there are larger parcels in Colchester that can't be subdivided and really should be able to be developed further.

Linda Goodman, 21 East Road, asked what is the reasoning behind the proposed Village rezonings. Is it an attempt to conform with the majority of the parcels that are existing in the Village. S. Hadd explained that this process is in the discussion only phase and there are no proposed parcels up for rezoning at this time. S. Hadd said the Commission is looking at what is the best for the larger area because spot-zoning of single parcels is not allowed.

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T. Mulcahy explained that possible rezonings are also being considered as a way to provide property owners with more flexibility for their property.

Betsy Orselet, Main Street, asked what the tax implications would be if her property was rezoned from R2 to R3. S. Hadd responded that the standards has been, with dealing with rezoning of parcels in Colchester, that a real difference will not be seen until the actual use changes or new development takes place. The rule of thumb with smaller lots is that when the use is all ready maximized nobody should see a tax change based on the zoning change. S. Hadd recommended that if a property owner has any concerns about their tax bill they should contact the Tax Assessor, Randy Mulligan. S. Hadd further noted that the same businesses are allowed in both the R2 and R3 districts.

Chris Conant discussed the importance of retaining the commercial businesses on the corner of Routes 2 & 7 and Route 2A and not making them non-conforming uses. S. Hadd commented that the intent is to make all properties as conforming as possible.

T. Mulcahy thanked the public for attending and participating in the meeting.

### **3. Review of Severance Road Rezoning Request**

Larry and Sue Shirland, 1161 Severance Road, were present at the meeting to discuss their request to be rezoned from Agricultural to Residential. At the last meeting, the Commission requested time to discuss the possible rezoning with the property owners to make sure that they were fully aware that such a rezoning would make their current agricultural operation nonconforming.

S. Hadd noted for clarification purposes that the property is located near the corner of Severance Road and Mill Pond Road and is a horse farm.

Sue Shirland said their property is totally surrounded by residences. The future Circumferential Highway is located to the rear of their property. Sue Shirland said the soils are not conducive for farming and she would like to see the property rezoned to R5. T. Mulcahy noted that if the property is rezoned to residential the horse farm will become nonconforming. Larry and Sue Shirland stated no objection.

Sue Shirland said she does not want to see her property zoned in a way that it could become a high density neighborhood. Larry Shirland explained that they would like to have options available to them so that if need be they could subdivide the property and sell off residential lots and that is why they are requesting to be rezoned.

The Commission reviewed the request and suggested that R1 might be an appropriate District to explore as it would fit in with the general area. Larry and Sue Shirland said they would be agreeable to a R1 zoning for their property.

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**4. Review of Future Agenda**

The Commission discussed the future agenda schedule. It was suggested that the Planning Commission meet once a month for a couple hours instead of meeting twice a month and only having an hour or less of work at each meeting. The Commission discussed the suggestion in an attempt to outline the advantages and disadvantages along with following the procedural rules for the Planning Commission

The Commission agreed to have one meeting in July and one meeting in August.

**5. Minutes of the June 2nd Meeting**

A **motion** was made by P. Larrabee and **seconded** by R. Paquette to **approve** the minutes of June 2, 2009. The **motion passed** with a vote of 4 – 0.

**6. Packet Information**

S. Hadd highlighted the information that the Commission received in their packets.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to be brought before the Commission, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. All members of the Commission present voted in favor of the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Minutes taken and respectfully submitted by Lisa Riddle.

Approved this 7th day of July 2009

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